

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

**Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 22 with the following amended paragraph:**

In a first exemplary aspect of the present invention, a method of thermally treating a magnetic layer of a wafer, includes annealing, for a predetermined short duration, a magnetic layer of a single wafer, applying at least one local magnetic field to the magnetic layer obtained without making electrical contact to the wafer, and cooling the single wafer using argon, wherein the annealing includes heating only a local area on the single wafer at a temperature of 280 degrees C for 60 seconds in the presence of a magnetic field using a rapid thermal anneal (RTA) lamp, wherein the applying a magnetic field to the magnetic layer is conducted after the annealing and includes applying local fields in different directions to different areas of the single wafer, and wherein the single wafer includes a magnetic stack formed thereon, the magnetic stack having a structure of  
50TaN/50Ta/175PtMn/15CoFe/9Al/50Py/100TaN.

**Please delete the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 1 in its entirety:**

~~In a second exemplary aspect, a method for processing a magnetic stack, includes annealing a single wafer having a magnetic stack formed thereon, with a predetermined fast anneal in a presence of a magnetic field.~~

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**Please delete the paragraph beginning on page 4, line 4 in its entirety:**

~~In third exemplary aspect of the present invention, an apparatus for treating a magnetic layer of a wafer, includes a heating element for annealing, for a predetermined short duration, a magnetic layer of a single wafer, and a magnet for applying a magnetic field during the annealing.~~